

LEGISLATURE OF NEBRASKA
NINETY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE
FIRST SESSION

LEGISLATIVE BILL 639

Introduced by Thompson, 14; Robak, 22

Read first time January 19, 1999

Committee: Natural Resources

A BILL

1 FOR AN ACT relating to state government; to authorize a
2 gubernatorial commission to study the creation of a new
3 department by merger of certain departments and a
4 commission; to provide intent; and to provide powers and
5 duties.
6 Be it enacted by the people of the State of Nebraska,

1 Section 1. It is the intent of the Legislature to
2 provide for a centralized administration for state natural
3 resources services and service agencies of the State of Nebraska
4 and to focus responsibility for the execution of soil, water, and
5 environmental protection policies of this state into the Department
6 of Natural Resources.

7 Sec. 2. The Legislature finds that as a result of the
8 creation of additional resource-related duties, agencies were
9 created to administer these additional duties or new functions were
10 assigned to existing agencies performing related or similar duties.
11 The Legislature further finds that a more unified system needs to
12 be developed for the coordination of planning, funding, resources,
13 and programs. The Legislature further finds that it is in the best
14 interest of the state to reorganize and consolidate the water, air,
15 and land resource-related agencies of the State of Nebraska. The
16 Legislature further finds that a code department should be created,
17 designated the Department of Natural Resources, headed by a single
18 director responsible to the Governor, guided by a broadly-based
19 Natural Resources Council, which would merge the Department of
20 Environmental Quality, the Department of Agriculture, the
21 Department of Water Resources, and the Nebraska Natural Resources
22 Commission.

23 Sec. 3. (1) The Governor shall convene a commission to
24 study and propose legislation for the purpose of merging the
25 Department of Environmental Quality, the Department of Agriculture,
26 the Department of Water Resources, and the Nebraska Natural
27 Resources Commission in order to create a new Department of Natural
28 Resources. The commission shall consist of the Director of

1 Environmental Quality, the Director of Agriculture, the Director of
2 Water Resources, the Director of Natural Resources, the Director of
3 Policy Research, and the chairperson of the Natural Resources
4 Committee of the Legislature. The Governor shall also appoint
5 three additional members on an at-large basis, one from each
6 congressional district. The Governor shall appoint the chairperson
7 of the commission from the membership.

8 (2) The commission shall prepare legislation which shall
9 accomplish the purpose of merging the Department of Environmental
10 Quality, the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Water
11 Resources, and the Nebraska Natural Resources Commission in order
12 to create a new Department of Natural Resources. The legislation
13 shall be presented to the Governor and the Legislature no later
14 than November 15, 1999.